

BULLET BACKGROUND PAPER

ON

TRANSFORMING THE SQUADRON OFFICER SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

PURPOSE

This proposal outlines how Squadron Officer School (SOS) can create Company Grade Officers (CGOs) who are informed, innovative, and connected, which will empower these leaders to solve any Air Force problem.

DISCUSSION

- SOS must create *informed* CGOs, who are armed with foundational knowledge, exposed to diverse perspectives, and equipped with practical leadership skills
 - Enhance core foundational knowledge with traditional and experiential learning in the areas of leadership, warfare, communication, profession of arms, and international security studies; but eliminate redundancies from students' commissioning source
 - Broaden and challenge students' existing perspectives through exposure to diverse perspectives on strategic and tactical issues affecting current and future policies
 - Invite experts from within and outside the Department of Defense (DoD), who offer diverse perspectives on current foreign policy and DoD strategy, to participate in panel discussions in a non-attribution environment
 - Invite regional experts to lecture on geopolitical challenges and the mindset of our adversaries in that region
 - Personalize the education experience by offering management and experiential electives to hone practical leadership skills and expand on areas of interest
- SOS must create CGOs who build and foster cultures of *innovation* within their immediate spheres of influence and larger organizations
 - Engage private sector organizations, known for innovation, to discuss techniques for fostering creativity and ideas
 - Establish partnerships with universities to leverage academic expertise and resources
 - "Innovate or Die" lecture series will bring young action officers who recently utilized creative thinking and innovation to overcome a recent, real world operational challenge

- SOS must provide an environment that reinforces a CGO's *connection* to mentors, other students, joint and inter-agency partners, and Air University (AU) as an institution

- Facilitate and provide dedicated time for Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC) mentorship opportunities between SOS, Air Command and Staff College (ACSC), Air War College (AWC), and core general officer leadership

- Leverage proximity of other Professional Military Education programs (AWC, ACSC, Senior Non-Commissioned Officer Academy, and Airman Leadership School) to create intra-service mentorship and engagement opportunities across all ranks

- Schedule briefings and engagements with international, joint service, and inter-agency partners (NSA, CIA, etc.) on lessons learned from previous engagements with the Air Force

- Bolster the connection between SOS students and our institution by creating a "Brain Bank" to leverage the untapped potential of 700 students to solve actual Air Force problems

 - Graduates of SOS will remain connected to AU by submitting their future problems to be considered by the "Brain Bank"

 - Students will graduate from SOS feeling empowered because AU and the Air Force trusts students to solve Air Force challenges and values the students' inputs

- SOS can create an informed, innovative, and connected CGO in 4 weeks. Fridays are reserved for reflection and white space. Mentorship, individual electives, and "Brain Bank" are interspersed throughout the course. The main topics are scheduled as follows:

- Week 1: Core foundational knowledge and broadening perspectives

- Week 2: Joint/partner nation perspectives

- Week 3: Panel discussions

- Week 4: "Innovate or Die" lecture series and ADWAR

SUMMARY

An approach to SOS centered on the themes above will aid CGOs in developing the triad of being informed, innovative, and connected, which will empower these leaders to solve any Air Force problem.